

Town of Brookline

Select Board's Climate Action Committee (SBCAC)

February 24, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Committee Members present: Nancy Heller (co-chair), Werner Lohe (co-chair), Michael Berger, James Carr, David Gladstone, Swannie Jett, Alan Leviton, David Pearlman, Deborah Rivers, Kathleen Scanlon, and Don Weitzman

Committee Members not present: Daniel Bennett, Linda Olson Pehlke, David Lescohier

Staff: Kara Brewton

Public: Several members of the public were in attendance, including Tom Kilday, Diane Sokal, Perry Grossman, Rick Ames, Jim Newman, Jeremy Bloch.

Materials: Agenda for 2/24/2020 meeting; powerpoint presentations regarding ICLEI ClearPath (Werner Lohe & Linda Olson Pehlke), Arch 2030 Districts (Deborah Rivers), ILFI Living Community Challenge (Rick Ames)

January Meeting Minutes – approved unanimously

Sustainability Staffing Updates

Nancy Heller noted that Collins Center has begun their work related to studying Sustainability staff – placement within the Town organizationally and related recommendations. She expects the work to be completed in late April or early May.

Minutes of the October 28, 2019 Meeting

Minutes were reviewed and approved, as amended by Kathleen Scanlon.

Brookline Green Electricity Working Team Update

Diane Sokol noted that the state Attorney General has a proposal to prohibit direct marketing from third party electricity suppliers to residential customers. She is concerned about reports that some residents have moved to town and nine months later are still not being swept into the Town's community aggregation program and/or not able to easily join the program if the resident calls the electricity supplier. The group continues to plan outreach events as well.

Kara Brewton added that the next BGE working team meeting is penciled in for March 23rd at 3:30 pm, and all working team meetings will continue to be updated on the working team webpage. Nancy Heller reports that Fred Russell, the Town's Director of Water & Sewer is working with her on ways to include an announcement about the BGE program on bills for new water accounts.

Kathy Scanlon brought up that Green Mountain, a third party energy supplier that is aggressively marketing in front of Trader Joe's with a table set up, and she believes is not using Class I Renewable Energy Credits in their program. Kara Brewton offered to follow up Trader Joe's/DPW/Police, as she did not think people were permitted to have a table on public sidewalk without prior permission from at least DPW.

Alan Leviton also wondered what recourse there might be if residents request to no longer receive mailings from a third party electric supplier and still receive mailings.

Transportation Working Team Update

Kara Brewton noted that the next working team meeting is scheduled for March 5th, at 7 pm. The only new update is that the working team will be meeting with Todd Kirrane to understand the upcoming Washington Street corridor complete streets project, and discuss with him the possibility of a temporary/pilot bus island project for a couple stops along Washington Street. The purpose of this kind of pilot is to keep buses in the travel lane, keep bicycle lanes unblocked from any vehicles near the bus stop, while providing an accessible path from the curb to the bus door.

Open Space Working Team Update

Michael Berger noted that several residents were interested in joining this group, and that their first meeting would include discussion on interests and priorities - without duplicating or working at cross-purposes staff-led efforts, such as the Urban Forestry Climate Resiliency Master Plan that is just getting started by the Parks & Open Space Division.

Green Schools Citizen Group

Jeremy Bloch is a teacher at the Coolidge Corner School and made several announcements of upcoming events:

3/15 – High School event, 7-8:30 pm

3/28 – Youth Climate Adaptation Fair, 11-2, Pierce School, followed by a film about plastics

3/31 – Innovation Fund is hosting a public dialogue, 7-8:30 pm

He noted that moving forward, their group may focus on: getting the School Committee to formalize concerns regarding the Climate Crisis; asking candidates for their opinion on policies related to Climate issues; increased effort on composting at the schools; and adoption of more curriculum-based learning at the High School. For example, Roger Grande at the High School is interested in project-based learning that could include agriculture and interdisciplinary learning. School Committee member David Pearlman agreed that while important projects are moving forward, the Schools do not yet have any holistic formal objectives around the climate crisis.

Jeremy also noted that they were looking at different Green Schools certification models, which includes operations as well curriculum, etc. Kara Brewton added that the Green Schools group and the School Committee should loop in with George Cole, Building Commission member – he is interested in forming a Subcommittee of the Building Commission to look at different

methods to meet fossil fuel free designs, including operations and maintenance. As the School system gets closer to adopting a Green School certification model, they should keep the Climate Action Committee and Building Commission in the loop, as their discussions and recommendations to the School Committee and Public Buildings Division will overlap.

Kara Brewton noted that the solar panel project for many of the school sites will likely go to a public hearing in March or April as a joint Board Select Board and Schools hearing.

Overview/Discussion of Various Municipal Sustainability Standards

Model	Costs	Benefits	Concerns	Other Information
ICLEI, information from Linda Olson Pehlke & Werner Lohe. Note they are changing their name to “Local Governments for Sustainability”	\$600/year	Group has been around for 30 years Wellesley, Action, Cambridge, & Newburyport are members also. Alan Leviton noted that it could be good for tracking greenhouse gases if the Town did not want to hire a consultant.	Alan Leviton noted the tools don’t help deal with the need to access more private sector data to be useful (especially forecasting data). Several SBCAC members noted that experience in past when there were three ICLEI staff people here in Boston was not very helpful at the individual level. Now the closest staff person is in New York.	They have a greenhouse gas inventory tool, an adaptation forecasting tool, & an online platform to share ideas with other members.
ARCH 2030 Districts, presented by Deborah Rivers	Thinks all materials may be free, as program seems to be self-directed.	Good, free online information resources Requires public-private partnership from the beginning so that you don’t have to rely on regulating the private sector. May be easier to pilot (e.g., Business Improvement District or other public-private governance) rather than taking on a Town-wide certification.	Jim Newman noted that Kendall Square looked into becoming an ARCH 2030 District, but didn’t get buy-in from one of the major property owners, Volpe. Does not require third-party review and certification like LEED.	ARCH 2030 was founded in 2004, started with building operations but now broadening (e.g., including embedded carbon), etc.

LEED for Cities, presented by James Carr, Jim Newman	Uncertain – likely a start-up fee and then plan on consulting fees as well.	LEED is well-established. Third party, independent reviewer, which is really important as the metrics are clear and verifiable.	Could be a very big lift to do this from scratch. Other communities may consider doing something like this at the same time as they update their Climate Action Plan. Would likely be a 2-3 year process. However, James noted that groups often utilize the checklist and do a one-day charrette to get a sense of how much effort it would take to meet the LEED requirements.	There are standardized minimum goals and optional and flexible credits to get various points. Note that ICLEI's previous Star Communities program (very metrics heavy) was purchased by LEED; 90 communities such as North Hampton & Cambridge that are now LEED Certified were transferred from being a Star Community.
ILFI Living Community Challenge, presented by Rick Ames & James Newman	\$1500 to register and \$15-25,000 to certify.	Includes a 3 rd party review also. Very good metrics and less bureaucratic than LEED process. Includes equitable justice and social dimensions. Includes regeneration issues like zero waste and zero water.	Would be very difficult to achieve, and in fact, the Town would likely not be able to ever achieve the requirements. Presenters thought the program was too nascent to be viable for the Town's use.	Spun off from a Northwestern chapter of LEED. Williams College Campus has adopted this model, and it could be very successful for campuses or groups of buildings controlled by one entity to use.

Dr. Swannie Jett noted that he was involved with Louisville, Kentucky when they were going through the process of becoming a Star Community. At the time, there was a large political and health concern involving a cancer cluster near the Rubbertown Industrial complex, which resulted in significant funding for the University of Louisville. The process was being used to force the government to work with community in that case, but it seemed like a model to encourage public-private cooperation.

Alan Leviton stated that while all these tools help track progress, the SBCAC first needed to be clear on what they were trying to accomplish. For example, it is so hard to actually get actions to happen [especially changing private sector operations and converting older residential stock].

There was further discussion about the idea of teaming up certifications or benchmarking with other communities. There are already those networks in place, such as the Mayor's Coalition (which is part of our regional planning agency's work that we regularly participate in). James Carr added that certainly some of the LEED requirements could be met regionally, as there are usually "alternative" compliance paths.

Nancy Heller noted that understanding the Town's management structure and bandwidth to take on any of these programs, along with a cost comparison, was critical prior to further discussion at a future SBCAC meeting. Rick Ames noted for that reason alone, the ARCH 2030 program may be the most useful as it directly engages with community and institutional partners.

Other Business

David Gladstone stated that the Sustainability is Everyone's Business program is now going to be an official part of the Climate Action Brookline's umbrella. Last year the first phase included business surveys and resource information. This year, they will be focusing on a smaller event that will include discussion of the survey results.

David Pearlman reminded everyone about the Brookline Fiscal Advisory Committee report recommendations, which included for purposes of transparency and financial health – that the Town and/or citizens include the financial impact and benefit that will likely be seen as a result of taking on any initiative or program related to sustainability.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 pm.

NOTE: The next regularly scheduled SBCAC meeting is March 23rd, 6pm.